

Reminder: Ridgeback Large Coastal Shark Fishery Closes April 15

This is a reminder that the commercial ridgeback large coastal shark (LCS) fishery in the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea closes at 11:30 pm local time, April 15, 2003. After this time, any ridgeback LCS caught by a vessel issued a commercial shark permit must be released, consistent with 50 CFR 635.28(b)(4).

Below are landings estimates in metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) for the Atlantic shark fisheries, as of April 10, 2003. These landings estimates are preliminary and do not include dead discards. Additionally, any unclassified landings are split equally between the ridgeback and non-ridgeback large coastal shark (LCS) species groups. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) may change this proportion between the ridgeback and non-ridgeback LCS species groups in the future.

Species Group	Semi-annual quota level	Estimated landings	Closure date
Ridgeback LCS (sandbar, silky, tiger)	391.5 mt dw	300 mt dw (77%)	April 15, 2003, 11:30 pm local time
Non-Ridgeback LCS (blacktip, spinner, bull, lemon, nurse, and the hammerheads)	465.5 mt dw	279 mt dw (60%)	May 15, 2003, 11:30 pm local time
Small Coastal Sharks	163 mt dw	33.4 mt dw (20%)	To be determined, as necessary
Blue sharks	136.5 mt dw	10.5 mt dw (2%)	
Porbeagle sharks	46 mt dw		
Pelagic sharks other than blue or porbeagle	244 mt dw		

Approximately 30 days prior to the start of the second semi-annual 2002 fishing season, NOAA Fisheries will publish the season's length (closing date) in the Federal Register, consistent with requirements at 50 CFR 635.27(b)(1)(iv)(D).

This FAX notice is a courtesy to Atlantic shark fishery interests to keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz at 301-713-2347.

Dean Swanson for
John H. Dunnigan
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

April 14, 2003
Date